

March 11, 2014

**Letter – Expression of Interest
VIA ECFS – Proceeding #WC Docket No. 10-90**

Chairman Thomas Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Michael O’Rielly
Jonathan Chambers
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW 20024
Washington, DC

**Re: Expression of Interest – Rural Broadband Experiments
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioners, and Mr. Chambers,

This letter is to express the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission’s interest in participating in the Rural Broadband Experiments announced at the January 30th FCC Open Meeting. While we do not have a project to propose, we take this opportunity to document central Virginia’s Planning District 10’s need for high-speed Internet service, specifically in the counties of Albemarle, Greene, Louisa, Nelson, and Fluvanna. We respectfully ask the Federal Communications Commission to consider our area’s need when making decisions regarding the Rural Broadband Trials and any future initiatives related to the Connect America Fund.

Background

Located in Central Virginia, the Thomas Jefferson Planning District (TJPDC) serves local governments by providing regional vision, collaborative leadership and professional service in developing effective solutions for regional land use, transportation, housing and environmental planning. The TJPDC is primarily rural with an urban core situated in and around the independent city of Charlottesville and the adjoining rural counties of Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, and Nelson. The area is centrally located in Virginia in the eastern foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains approximately 71 miles west of Richmond; 110 miles southwest of Washington, D.C.; and 162 miles northwest of Norfolk.

Demographics: The Urban area has a population density of 3.2 residents per acre and the remaining rural area has a population density of 0.1 residents per acre. The remaining population is located around the regions small towns and Census designated places. These include the towns of Scottsville, Mineral, Louisa, Ruckersville, Stanardsville, and Crozet. (See map for regional layout). The 2010 US Census population for Charlottesville is 43,476 and the population for the five surrounding counties is 191,237.

The region is predominately forested, with trees covering 69% of the land, some of which are planted for later harvesting. The remaining land is used for crops and agriculture (18%) and developed land (7%), with water and wetlands making up 2%; grass shrub scrub and barren land constitutes 4%.

Economic History: Defined as the Charlottesville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) for statistical purposes, the region boasts a robust economy and growing population. The diverse economy of the region provides a variety of employment opportunities in government, trade, transportation and utilities, professional and business services, and the leisure and hospitality industries. The Charlottesville MSA is home to major manufacturers such as Creative Industries, GE Fanuc, Michelin Tire Corp., and National Optronics, Inc. The largest private and nonprofit employers within the region are Crutchfield Corporation, Fork Union Military Academy, Martha Jefferson Hospital, Piedmont Virginia Community College, State Farm Mutual, Wintergreen Resorts, Inc., the University of Virginia and the University of Virginia Health Sciences Center. With a civilian labor force of about 105,000, the Charlottesville MSA provides companies with a large labor pool and over 36,000 students enter the workforce each year. The unemployment rate has remained lower than the state average and was at 4.3% as of November 2013. In 2010 the rural per capita personal income was approximately \$29,124 and in 2010 the median family income was approximately \$67,780. Combined with a low cost of living, the Charlottesville MSA is an affordable area for professionals and families.

Internet Services: There are 33 US census tracts in the TJPCD rural areas meeting eligibility for high cost locations; of those, 23 meet the extremely high cost location criteria. We have compiled the following Virginia data for our region which has been taken from <http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/rural-broadband-experiments>

County/Name/ID	Tracts	HCL	EHCL
51003 Albemarle 5100301	0100,0201,0202,0300,0401,0402,0500,0602,0800,0903,1000,11100,11201,11202,11301,11303,11400	2035	79
51065 Fluvanna 51065020	101,200,300	935	42
51079 Greene 51079030	101,200,200	518	24
51109 Louisa 51109950	100,201,202,300,400,500	2886	72
51125 Nelson 51125950	100,200,300	3368	186
Total Locations		9742	403

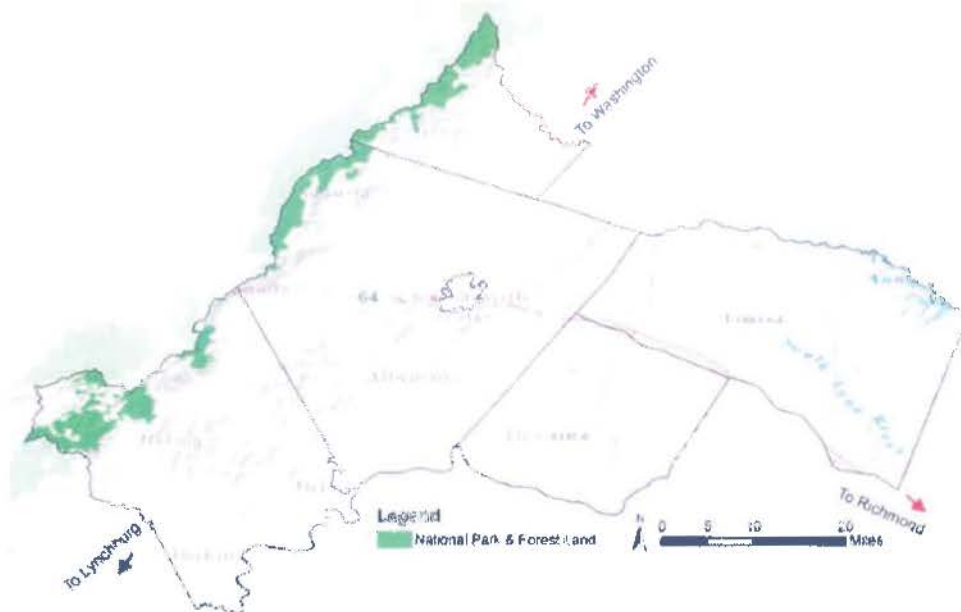
HCL – High Cost Locations

EHCL - Extremely High Cost Locations

Goals for the Future: The TJPCD envisions a region where teleworkers and rural businesses have access to high speed internet, allowing efficiencies associated with working from home and competitive participation in markets that are unrestrained by location. Workforce development will also be favorably impacted. Because students in rural areas tend to lag behind urban counterparts, access to broadband in the home will enhance potentials for improved academic achievement, resulting in a stronger workforce. With investment in rural broadband, new and existing rural businesses will flourish and workforce development efforts will sustain competitive economic growth and development in the region.

Geographic Territory

Geography: The region's boundaries are defined by the Blue Ridge Mountains, which run north to south along the Planning District's western boundary. This mountainous area contains the region's highest elevations and steep slopes. Additionally most of the land



is protected from development by the Shenandoah National Park and the George Washington National Forest. Traveling east from the mountains the Region enters an area of hilly terrain that is characterized by rolling hills known as the Virginia Piedmont.

Notably, a portion of the region falls within the National Radio Quiet Zone, established by the Federal Communications Commission in 1958, to minimize interference with the National Radio Astronomy Observatory. Locating broadband infrastructure within this boundary adds another regulatory layer to the permitting process and requires modification of typical designs. Portions of Greene, half of Albemarle and most of Nelson Counties are impacted by these requirements.

Technology/Service Area: Generally the areas surrounding Charlottesville, beginning just outside the edge of the urban ring and extending to the farthest edge of the region has minimal or no broadband service delivered by fiber-optic, cable, or DSL. In some areas wireless is non-existent or spotty at best. The terrain of mountains, rolling hills, river bottoms and forests will require a combination of the technologies available. Awareness outreach regarding the positive aspects of broadband will also be key to developing a sustaining customer base of subscribers in the rural areas. Specifically the northwestern, western and southern portions of Albemarle, the western portion of Greene, the majority of Louisa, the southern and southwestern portions of Fluvanna, and most of Nelson.

Proposed technology

We fully expect to work with local providers in crafting a solution to providing broadband in our region. Given the region's varied terrain of mountains, valleys, and Piedmont, service will require a mix of wireless, cable, fiber, and copper. While we would prefer to see a minimum 25 Mbps in each household and business, we suspect the price-point would be unrealistic for most families. Our goal would be to provide monthly service to subscribers at an affordable \$35 a month with a minimum speed of 10 Mbps down and 2.0 Mbps up. It is significant to note that CenturyLink, the most prevalent provider of DSL in the region, has issued an Expression of Interest to participate in the IP Trial.

Telemedicine is one potential innovative technology that could be enhanced and expanded in the region. The University of Virginia and other partners are actively developing a broadband based system for delivering medical care. Both clinicians and patients would benefit greatly from enhanced connectivity through the Broadband Trial. "Telehome" monitoring would improve from the rapid transfer rate in data from patient's home to medical offices and would also provide better response time for the video

function of the telehome device. It would also give medical clinicians visiting the patients at home greater flexibility to connect to the internet to access medical records and patient education information.

Existing Providers

The following is not meant to be a complete list of providers. We have found that identifying speed, price and service is only available specific to an individual address and is therefore extremely difficult to acquire. We do know that some of the providers in the region include Verizon Wireless, AT&T, nTELOS, Comcast, CenturyLink, EarthLink, Hughes Net and others. Verizon has set up "hot spots" in Louisa County where some can connect. Louisa does have a propagation map identifying where towers for wireless are needed. Note that in each county there are areas where there is no service.

	CenturyLink	EarthLink	CVA Link	Verizon	AT&T	HughesNet	Comcast
Albemarle							
DSL	✓						
Fluvanna							
DSL	✓						
Satellite						✓	
Greene							
DSL	✓						
Wireless				✓	✓		
Satellite						✓	
Fiber Optic Cable							✓
Louisa							
Wireless			✓				
DSL (Town)				✓			
Nelson							
DSL	✓						

Local or Tribal Government Participation

There are no federally recognized tribes in our region. Of the eleven tribes that have been recognized by the Commonwealth of Virginia, no tribal governments or associations are located in the TJPDC region.

Anchor Institutions

Libraries:

Jefferson-Madison Regional
Central Library
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Greene County Library
222 Main Street
Stanardsville, VA 22973

Fluvanna County Public Library
214 Commons Blvd.
Palmyra VA 22963

Louisa County Library
881 Davis Highway
Louisa, VA 23117

Nelson Memorial Library
 8521 Thomas Nelson Highway
 Lovingston, VA 22949

Northside Library
 300 Albemarle Square
 Charlottesville, VA 22901

Crozet Library
 5791 Three Notch'd Road
 Crozet, VA 22932

Scottsville Library
 330 Bird Street
 Scottsville, VA 2459

Schools

	Elementary		Middle (MS)	High(HS)
Albemarle				
	Agnor-Hurt	Meriwether Lewis	Jackson P. Burley	Albemarle
	Baker-Butler	Virginia L. Murray	Community Charter	Monticello
	Broadus Wood	Red Hill	Joseph T. Henley	Murray
	Brownsville	Scottsville	Jack Jouett	Western Albemarle
	Paul H. Cale	Stone-Robinson	Mortimer Y Sutherland	
	Crozet	Stony Point	Leslie H. Walton	
	Mary C. Greer	Woodbrook		
	Hollymead	Benjamin F. Yancey		
Fluvanna				
	Central		Fluvanna Middle	Fluvanna County HS
	Carysbrook			Abrams Academy
	West Central Primary			
Greene				
	Greene County Primary		William Monroe MS	William Monroe HS
	Nathanael Greene			Technical Ed. Center
	Ruckersville			
Louisa				
	Jouett		Louisa County MS	Louisa County HS
	Thomas Jefferson			
	Trevilians			
	Moss-Nuckols			
Nelson				
	Rockfish River		Nelson County MS	Nelson County HS
	Tye River			

Healthcare:

Martha Jefferson Hospital (including satellite facilities listed below)
 459 Locust Avenue Charlottesville VA 22902

- Martha Jefferson Starr Hill Health Center
- Outpatient Care Center at Pantops
- Outpatient Care Center at Proffit Road
- Health Services at Spring Creek (Zion Crossroads serving Louisa/Fluvanna)

University of Virginia Hospital(select rural satellite facilities listed below)
1215 Lee Street, Charlottesville, Virginia, VA 22908

- Crossroads Family Medicine (southern Albemarle)
- Lake Monticello Primary Care (Fluvanna)
- Jefferson Area Board of Aging – Physicians at JABA
- Medical Associates of Louisa
- Stoney Creek Family Medicine
- UVA Imaging/Dialysis Zion Crossroads (Louisa/Fluvanna)
- University of Virginia Research Park (Albemarle County Location)

Transportation

Charlottesville Albemarle Airport

100 Bowen Loop, Suite 200 Charlottesville, VA 22911

The Charlottesville Albemarle Airport (CHO) is a non-hub, commercial service airport offering one-stop international and domestic destinations, as well as daily non-stop flights around the U.S. Served by Delta, United Express, American Airlines, and US Airways offering over daily non-stop flights to and from Charlotte, Philadelphia, New York/LaGuardia, Washington/Dulles, Atlanta, and Chicago.

Government:

National Ground Intelligence Center (NGIC)

2055 Boulders Road Charlottesville, VA 22911

Located in northern Albemarle County in central Virginia, is a major subordinate command of INSCOM and is the Defense center of excellence for ground force production.

Albemarle County Offices:

County Office Building
401 McIntire Road
Charlottesville, VA 22902

County Office Building
1600 5th Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Greenwood Community Center
865 Greenwood Road
Crozet, VA 22932

Meadows Community Center
5800 Meadows Drive
Crozet, VA 22932

Scottsville Community Center
250 Page Street
Scottsville, VA 24590

Fluvanna County Offices
County Office Building
132 Main Street
Palmyra VA 22963

Fork Union Community Center
5725 James Madison Highway Fork
Fork Union VA 23055

Greene County Offices
County Office Building
40 Celt Road
Stanardsville, VA 22973.

Greene County Visitor Center
8315 Seminole Trail, Suite 2
Ruckersville, VA 22968

Nelson County Offices
Nelson County Administration
84 Courthouse Square
Lovingston, VA 22949

Nelson County Visitor's Center
8519 Thomas Nelson Hwy
Lovingston, VA 22949

Louisa County Offices
Louisa County Administration
1 Woolfolk Ave
Louisa VA 23093

Betty J. Queen Intergenerational Center
522 Industrial Drive
Louisa, VA

Piedmont Crossroads Visitors Center
135-A Wood Ridge Terrace
Zion Crossroads, VA 22942
(Fluvanna, Louisa)

Thank you for considering our Expression of Interest in your decisions about the amount of funding that will be allocated in the Rural Broadband Experiments. We commend the FCC in this effort to connect rural communities and are ready to help you close the digital divide.

Sincerely,



Patricia A. Groot,
Grants Administrator